

### 12/28/99 Struck by tree

A 57-year-old timber cutter was struck by a decayed stem, which fell from a hemlock school marm (a tree stem that branches into two or more tops). The victim had worked on and off for this employer for many years. The cutter had been given an overview of the employers APP prior to starting the job. The victim was considered fully trained with over 30 plus years of timber felling experience.

It is assumed that the victim tried to fall an approx. 80-foot tall fir with an approximately an 18-inch butt towards the northeast. Witnesses indicated that a smaller tree was hung up into a larger tree up hill from the leaner. This lean would have been towards the N-NE. It was to the right of the employer's active log landing. Witnesses indicated that both trees went down at the same time.

The shovel operator was watching the cutter. He indicated the cutter was watching the two trees fall. The operator stated that he saw the chunk come out from the tree above uphill from the faller a short time after the falling trees hit the ground. He indicated the faller did not look up or seem to be concerned of a hazard in the area. The tree that the chunk came from was seen to sway then the chunk came out and fell onto the cutter. The choker setter in the brush indicated he saw two trees fall, and then saw a chunk come out of a tree and strike the cutter. The cutter did not seem to be aware of the falling chunk or notice the hazard in the area.

Identify trees with dead tops. Fall trees into the open whenever possible. Create and use an escape path when falling timber. Be aware of overhead hazards. After brushing another tree, check for widow makers (something hung up on the top of a tree). Be aware that ground vibration or brushing other trees is enough to topple unstable snags or dead tops.